



The Be Fit Minute

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WHAT TO BRING TO YOUR HOLIDAY TABLE

Don't give the gift of weight gain this holiday. An occasional seasonal treat has its place, but bring healthy options to your holiday too. Read on to learn how to make it through the holidays without any scale-related presents from Santa.

HEALTHY HOLIDAY PARTY SUGGESTIONS:

- When going to holiday parties bring something that you can rely on as a healthy option. This way you'll be able to balance out some of the typical party foods.
- Aim to fill half your buffet plate with fruits and vegetables. If you are hosting, try to offer a number of appetizers or sides that contain fruits or vegetables: they help fill you up, which may leave less room for Christmas cookies.
- If you are hosting a party, set out small plates. This may help limit how much food gets piled on plates: including your own.

QUICK HOLIDAY APPETIZERS

BRUSCHETTA

Bruschetta consists of thin slices of toasted bread (baguette-sized) with a small amount of a sauce, spread, or prepared vegetable on top. The topping combinations are endless. Try diced tomatoes with basil and balsamic vinegar; sundried tomatoes and ricotta cheese; cranberry spread and blue cheese; or white beans tossed with roasted red peppers, rosemary, and feta cheese.

Why it works: Think of bruschetta as a mini open face sandwich that you can put fruit and vegetables on.

STUFFED FIGS

Slice a fig in half and place about a teaspoon of a strong cheese (like blue cheese or feta) on each half. Drizzle the figs with honey and arrange the fig halves on a platter. Alternatively, you could also broil the figs for a few minutes to slightly caramelize them and melt the cheese.

Why it works: If you've been known to stalk the cheese tray, this is a way to indulge in a little cheese without going overboard, as the cheese is pre-portioned for you. You'll also get a bit of fruit with every bite.

FRUIT AND CHEESE PLATTER

Select easy-to-eat fruits like grapes, strawberries, figs, and apricots. If you know the number of guests, plan on 1-2 ounces of cheese per person. (1 ounce of cheese is about the size of 4 dice and contains approximately 100 calories.) If selecting multiple cheeses, try to vary the tastes and textures. For instance, you may pair a mild cheese (like a cheddar, gouda, or brie) with a goat or sheep's milk cheese and a stronger cheese (like a stilton or other blue-veined cheese).

Why it works: It's a simple, elegant dish that requires no cooking, just assembling. Small fruits are also easy to eat if you are standing and socializing. Are you more of a "sweet" than "savory" person? Bring chocolate dipped fruit instead.

VEGGIES AND DIP

Sugar snap peas, carrots, celery, broccoli, cherry tomatoes, cauliflower, and cucumbers all hold up well on holiday vegetable platters. Pair them with hummus or a vegetable dip prepared with Greek yogurt and herbs.

Why it works: It doesn't require much elbow grease in the kitchen and is an easy way to ensure vegetables make a guest appearance at holiday parties.

SHRIMP COCKTAIL

If you are short on time, you can often buy already cooked shrimp (found in the frozen food section). Cocktail sauce is also simple to make or buy and contains lower calorie ingredients like ketchup, lemon juice, and horseradish.

Why it works: Shrimp is a great source of protein. It is also fairly low in calories: one jumbo-sized shrimp only has about 15 calories. Cocktail sauce also has about 15 calories per tablespoon.

PROSCIUTTO WRAPPED PRODUCE

Both fruits and vegetables can be wrapped in prosciutto for a quick, elegant appetizer. Grilled or roasted asparagus can be chilled and then wrapped with a piece of prosciutto. Fig halves and melon slices are also frequently wrapped in prosciutto.

Why it works: Like many of the other options listed, it is an easy way to ensure that produce will be around during the holidays.

